

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201203117, University of Aberdeen  
**Sector:** further and higher education  
**Subject:** academic appeal/exam results/degree classification  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C was unhappy with the academic appeals process that he had to follow when he claimed that his dissertation (document of research and findings, submitted in support of candidature for an academic degree or professional qualification) was unfairly marked. He had been given a fail grade, which meant that he would not be able to go on to study for a doctorate. We explained that we could not look at academic appeals other than where there was a failure of process or mismanagement. Mr C complained that he had not been able to see the comments on his dissertation before the appeals decision meeting, and that the university had not followed their appeals procedures.

After we investigated, we did not uphold Mr C's complaints. Our investigation found that the university had followed its feedback policy, and that comments on final assessments were available if individual students approached their tutor or supervisor. They had advised Mr C to do this, but he had not. The appeals procedure did not enable individuals to question academic judgement or to debate the assessment. The university had followed its procedures in checking that assessment guidelines had been followed, and all markers were in agreement about the grade awarded. The stages of the appeals process had been followed and were clearly documented.